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MUTED, SUBDUED TOKYO 2020 GAMES OPENS TODAY

The Opening Ceremony will be held without spectators amid Covid concerns on Friday

ONLY 26 INDIANS TO MARCH

In a departure from the past, there will only be 26 during the march past. This is to avoid exposure to Covid-19. Two flag bearers will be men's hockey captain Manpreet Singh and 2012 Olympic medallist MC Mary Kom | P15

MORE COVID CASES & OFF FIELD DRAMA

In what is likely to be a running theme, two more athletes at the Village tested positive for Covid-19 on Thursday. Besides, 12 other Games-related personal were found infected. Meanwhile, Opening Ceremony director, Kentaro Kobayashi, was fired after footage emerged of him making Holocaust-related jokes in a 90s TV skit

THE GALA TODAY

4.30PM: OPENING CEREMONY

INDIA IN ARCHERY

5.30am onwards: Women's individual ranking round

9.30am: Men's individual ranking

BSY drops big hint, says will wait for word from top brass

Breaks silence on leadership issue, says that he had decided to quit 2 months ago

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

AMID heightened speculation over his exit after completing two years in office, Chief Minister B S Yediyurappaon Thursday said that so far, he has not received any message from the party high command and he will continue to work till the last minute.

"I will be completing two years in office on July 26. The party high command will send a message this weekend and I will abide by their direction," he said, breaking his silence on the leadership issue.

Hinting at his possible resignation, the CM emphasised that he will follow the instructions of the party top brass. Yediyurappa also said he had decided to resign two months ago itself to make way for others.

Just last month, the CM had stated that he will quit the day the high command asks him to do so. After his recent visit to the national capital, political circles have been abuzz with speculation over his imminent exit and the names of many BJP leaders are doing the rounds as his successor.

"I will be the CM as long as they tell me to hold this post. Else, I will be seen travelling across the state and working for the party," he said. Whether he is in power or not, he will continue to work for the party and strengthen the BJP in Karnataka, Yediyurappa stressed. He, however, refused to divulge details on his next move.

Yediyurappa's government will complete two years in office on July 26 and a small booklet on the government's work and achievements in the last two years will be released on that day. "I want to tell people what I have done," the CM said.

As several seers from the Lingayat and other communities continue to extend their support to the Lingayat strongman and warn the BJP central leadership against dislodging him, the 78-year-old CM said Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP national president JP Nadda had a 'special concern' for him and allowed him to work as CM even after 75 years of age and had also appreciated his work.

CONTINUED IN: P4

Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa arrives for the cabinet meeting at Vidhana Soudha, in Bengaluru on Thursday | MAGARAJA GADEKAL

HOUSING, IRRIGATION GET BOOST

The state cabinet on Thursday approved housing projects worth ₹8,500 crore. "Four lakh houses in rural and one lakh houses in urban areas will be built under various schemes in two years," Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Basavaraj Bommai said. It also approved ₹8,800 crore for irrigation-related works. P4

BOMMAI, JOSHI, RAVI OR NIRANI?

While BS Yediyurappa himself is believed to be actively looking at who could emerge as his probable successors, sources suggest that the CM has been pitching for Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai, while central leaders are also looking at Murugesh Nirani, CT Ravi and Union minister Pralhad Joshi. P6

CELESTIAL DISCOVERY

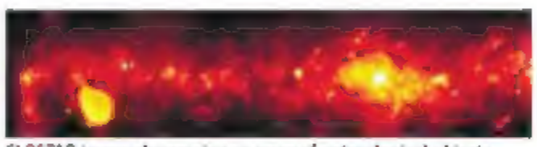
Indian scientists on team which found 80 star explosions

PEARL MARIA D'SOUZA @ Bengaluru

AN international team, including Indian scientists, have discovered 80 new explosions of stars - called supernova remnants (SNRs) - in the Milky Way galaxy, revealing previously unseen signatures to provide more clarity on how stars form and die. This had largely remained a mystery to astronomers and astrophysicists.

An explosion of a star, resulting in an SNR, is followed by an expanding shock wave consisting of ejected material that travels through interstellar space. These include heavy elements and accelerated cosmic rays, which have been detected, claiming "unprecedented sensitivity and details", by the international team that includes scientists from the Bengaluru-based Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)-established Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology (IIST) in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.

Previous surveys by various other teams had so far detected 270 SNRs, all of them observed by the radio emissions through the interstellar space. But there are an estimated 1,000 SNRs in the Milky Way, which means at least over 700-odd such SNRs continue to evade detection. CONTINUED ON: P7



GLOSTAR image showcasing an array of astrophysical objects, from newly formed massive stars to remnants of supernova explosions | PIC CREDIT: GLOSTAR TEAM

EXPRESS READ

Bus runs over 6-year-old girl in freak accident

BENGALURU: A six-year-old girl - Jeevika - was killed when she was flug through the windshield of a bus in which she was travelling, after its driver applied brakes suddenly, and the vehicle ran over her. The accident occurred in Magadi taluk on Wednesday. P6

Financial bids for Air India likely by September 15

NEW DELHI: Financial bids for Air India are likely to be received from qualified interested bidders (QIBs) by September 15 this year, Minister of State for Civil Aviation V K Singh said on Thursday. The Centre had invited Expression of Interests (EoIs) for Air India on January 27, 2020. The last date of submission of EoIs was December 14, 2020.

12 Maha BJP MLAs move apex court

NEW DELHI: Twelve BJP MLAs from Maharashtra have moved the Supreme Court, challenging their one-year suspension from the Legislative Assembly.

WITH THIS ISSUE

CITY'S BEST WEEKEND GUIDE

INDULGE

32 PAGES, INCLUDING 16 OF INDULGE (TABLOID)

JAB-O-METER TAKE YOUR SHOT

July 21: 20,83,892 doses

July 22: 48,86,103 doses

TOTAL DOSES: 42,20,28,015

NATIONWIDE	JULY 21	JULY 22
Fresh cases	42,015	41,383
Recoveries	36,977	38,652
Deaths	3,998	507

KARNATAKA	JULY 21	JULY 22
Fresh cases	1,639	1,653
Recoveries	2,214	2,572
Deaths	36	31

Tax raid on media group draws flak

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bhopal/Lucknow

TAX sleuths knocked on the doors of Bhopal-headquartered Dainik Bhaskar group and Uttar Pradesh-based Bharat Samachar in the wee hours on Thursday, raiding their premises across various states for alleged tax evasion.

Multiple teams of the I-T department from Delhi and Mumbai conducted the searches under Section 132 of the Income Tax Act at business premises owned by the two media groups in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and UP, following specific inputs about tax evasion by these firms.

The Bhaskar group, which runs around 65 daily newspaper editions in Hindi, Marathi and Gujarathi, had run a series of stories on the alleged cover-up of casualties in MP, Gujarat and UP as well as the vaccine wastage in Rajasthan. After the authorities denied reports of mass graves on the banks of Ganga, it sent an army of reporters to document the same. The raids drew sharp criticism from Opposition leaders as both the media groups had done numerous stories and programmes highlighting the failure of authorities in managing the pandemic.

"The attack on journalists and media houses is yet another BRUTAL attempt to stifle democracy," tweeted West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee.

Big drama in RS; former CBI chief spied upon?

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

THE Pegasus snoopgate continued to roil governments globally on Thursday, with French President Emmanuel Macron holding an emergency cybersecurity meeting to weigh action and rework security protocols after it emerged that his phone numbers figured among those that were potentially hacked.

In Mexico, reports said previous administrations from 2012 to 2018 had spent about $300 million to purchase the spyware from the NSO Group, an Israeli firm.

Back home, attempts by the Modi government to shake off charges of using the spyware became that much more difficult, with revelations that former CBI chief Alok Verma's phone numbers were added to the list the day he was chucked out of the hot seat in 2018. Interestingly, mobile numbers of his adversary Rakesh Asthana were added to the list an hour before Verma's.

Meanwhile, Parliament continued to be in turmoil as both Houses witnessed sloganeering and disruptions. The Rajya Sabha witnessed high drama as Trinamool member Shantanu Sen snatched a copy of a statement on the spyware from Electronics and Information Technology minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, tore it up and flung it towards the Chair. Other Trinamool members did likewise and the House was adjourned for the day. Shortly thereafter, minister Hardeep Puri and Sen exchanged sharp words, forcing Marshals to intervene. Sen later said Puri verbally abused and was on the verge of assault before he was rescued.

The Centre is learnt to be planning a privilege motion against Sen. The Opposition wants a discussion on Pegasus with Prime Minister Narendra Modi or Home minister Amit Shah speaking on the matter.

STAND BY IT, SAYS AMNESTY

With the BJP trying to demolish the snoopgate list claiming it was fake, Amnesty International defended its findings, saying "Amnesty categorically stands by the findings of the Pegasus Project."

BID TO DISTRACT ATTENTION

Rumours pushed on social media are intended to distract from the widespread unlawful targeting of journalists, activists and others, it added

BACK TO SCHOOL?

Offline classes may resume in phases, decision next week

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

AMID the demand for restarting offline classes, Primary and Secondary Education Minister S Suresh Kumar on Thursday said that the Education Department's task force is preparing a report on resumption of physical classes.

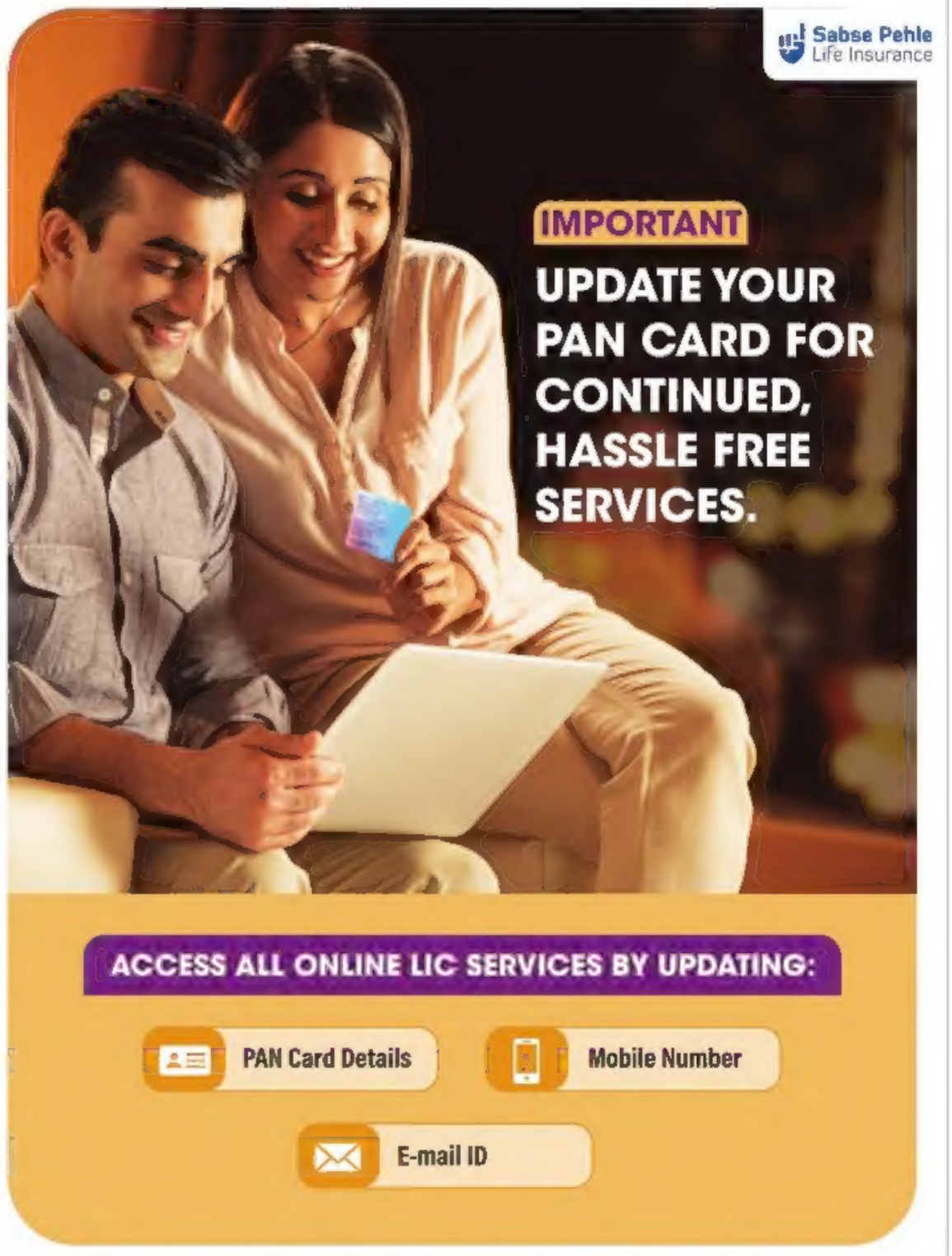
"A meeting in this regard is scheduled for Monday or Tuesday. Discussions are under way and the department is mulling to start offline classes phase-wise, starting with classes 9 to 12," he said, adding that the decision will be announced next week. Meanwhile, Health and Medical Education Minister Dr K Sudhakar on Thursday announced that all teaching and non-teaching staff of government, aided and unaided schools will be vaccinated on priority.

Noting the possible psychological impact of online classes on students, Dr Sudhakar said that students cannot rely on this forever, and schools will have to be reopened sooner or later. "We will have a wide consultation process before arriving at any decision. Expert opinions will also be considered," he added.

Dr Sudhakar also said that the state's vaccination coverage will cross the three-crore mark in a few days.

All educational institutions will be reopened in a phased manner... Matter will be discused with the CM

Dr K Sudhakar, Health Minister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